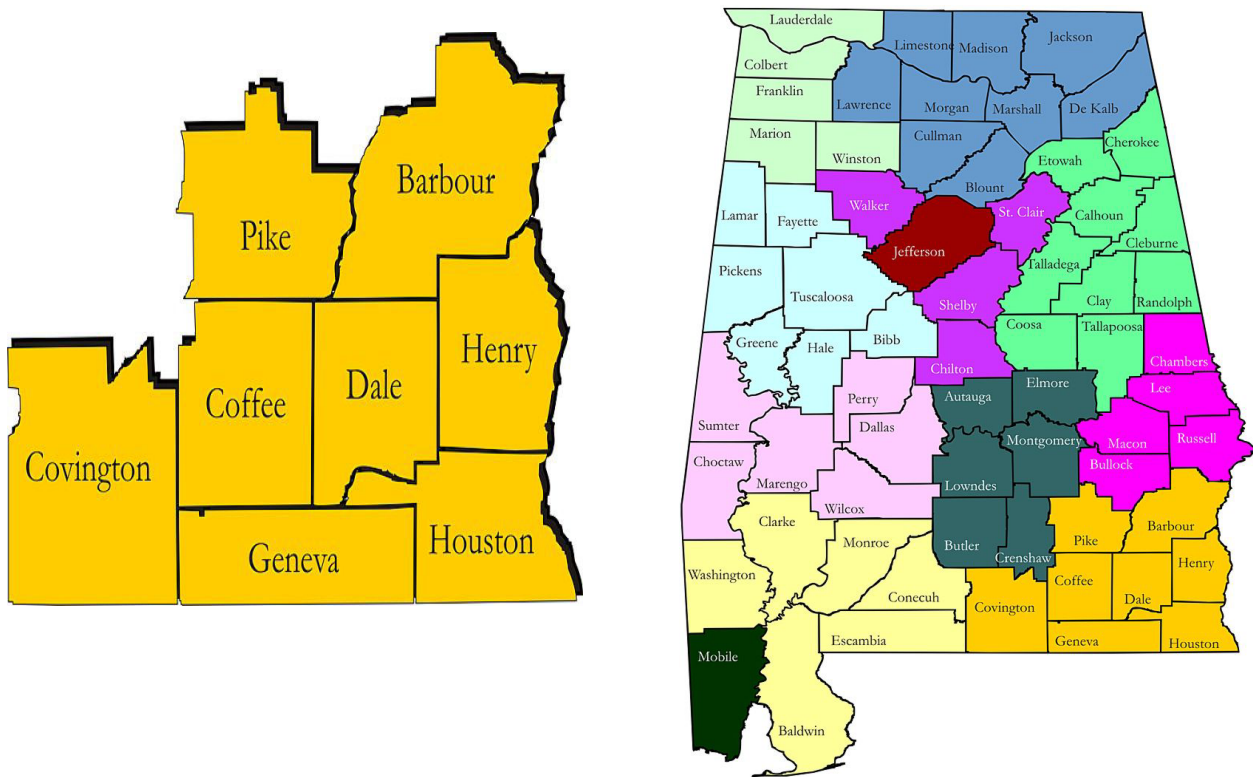


WIAA Region 10 Workforce Report



Summary

- Region 10 had a 3.9 percent unemployment rate in August 2005, with 5,840 unemployed. However, the eight-county region has a 37,700-strong available labor pool that is looking for better jobs and includes about 31,860 underemployed workers. The underemployed are willing to commute farther and longer; for the one-way commute, 63 percent are prepared for 20 or more minutes longer and 55 percent will go 20 or more extra miles.
- In 2000, about 8,320 residents commuted out of the region for work, compared to 9,280 in-commuters. Barbour, Dale, Geneva, and Houston counties had net commuter inflows. Significant commuting within the region suggests that the roads and highways must be maintained properly to ensure uninterrupted movement of workers as impeded movement of workers can slow economic development.
- Educational attainment in the region is lower than for Alabama. Of the age 25 and over population, Alabama has 75 percent high school graduates and 19 percent bachelor's or higher degree holders, compared to 72 percent and 15 percent, respectively, for the region. Coffee, Dale, and Houston counties have the highest educational attainment levels.

- Employment is currently growing faster than the labor force. More jobs might reduce commuter outflow, but also presents a challenge to workforce development. Initiatives addressing this challenge should consider (i) focusing on hard-to-serve populations (e.g. out-of-school youth and illiterate adults), (ii) facilitating in-commuting, and (iii) helping communities gain new residents. Increasing population is generally more beneficial to communities than in-commuting. Hard-to-serve populations are often outside of the mainstream economy, poor, and have difficulty finding work, but are potential labor force participants. Investment in training, transportation, child care, infrastructure, etc. may be needed to tap this resource.
- By sector, the top five employers in the region are manufacturing; health care and social assistance; retail trade; educational services; and accommodation and food services. These five industries provided 76,620 jobs, 64 percent of the region total in the second quarter of 2004. Three of the leading employers—manufacturing, health care and social assistance, and educational services—had higher average monthly wages than the \$2,340 regional average.
- On average about 6,400 jobs were created per quarter from second quarter 2001 to second quarter 2004; quarterly net job flows averaged 640. Job creation is the number of new jobs that are created either by new area businesses or through expansion of existing firms. Net job flows reflect the difference between current and previous employment at all businesses.
- Fifteen occupations are both high-demand and fast-growing and include Registered Nurses; Aircraft Mechanics and Service Technicians; and General and Operations Managers. The top five high-demand occupations are Cashiers; Retail Salespersons; Waiters and Waitresses; Combined Food Preparation and Serving Workers; and Truck Drivers, Heavy and Tractor-Trailer. The top five fast-growing occupations are Medical Assistants; Dental Assistants; Home Health Aides; Medical and Health Services Managers; and Production, Planning, and Expediting Clerks.
- The top 50 highest earning occupations are mainly in health, legal, management, engineering, computer, and education fields. Of the top 10 high-earning occupations, six are in health, three are in management, and one is legal. Almost all high-earning occupations require bachelor's or higher degrees.
- Fast-growing or high-demand occupations are generally not high-earning. Of 39 selected high-demand, 17 selected fast-growing, and 50 selected high-earning occupations, only one high earning occupation, General and Operations Managers, is in the high-demand category. Just two occupations—Pharmacists and Medical and Health Services Managers—are both high-earning and fast-growing.
- The most relevant skills for high-demand and fast-growing occupations are basic: active listening, reading comprehension, speaking, writing, and service orientation. High-demand and high-growth occupations are also common to the leading employment sectors. Economic development should aim to diversify and strengthen the region's economy by retaining, expanding, and attracting more high-wage providing industries.

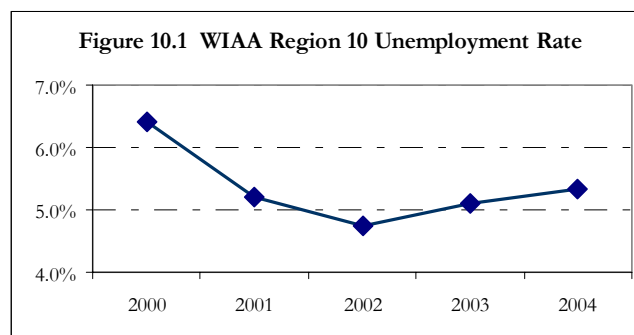
- The finding that basic skills are important—for high-demand, high-growth, and high-earning jobs—indicates a strong need for training in these skills. Ideally, all high school graduates should possess basic skills so that postsecondary and higher education can focus on other and more complex skills as well as enhancing these basic skills. Employers should be an integral part of planning for training as they can help identify future skill needs and any existing gaps.
- Skill and education requirements for jobs keep rising. This emphasizes the need to raise educational attainment in the region and presents challenges to workforce development. It also presents opportunities for economic development through workforce development activities that involve postsecondary and higher education institutions. Higher incomes to graduates from these institutions would help to raise personal income for the region. Raising personal income by improving educational attainment for a region that has a large number of low wage jobs is an effective economic development strategy.
- A highly educated and productive workforce is a critical economic development asset. Together, workforce development and economic development can provide this asset and build a strong well-diversified regional economy. Indeed, one cannot achieve success without the other.

Workforce Supply

Labor Force Activity

The labor force includes all persons in the civilian noninstitutional population who are age 16 and over and who have, or are actively looking for, a job. Typically, those who have no job and are not looking for one are not included (e.g. students, retirees, and the disabled). Table 10.1 shows labor force information for Region 10 and its eight counties for 2004 and August 2005. Larger increases in the number of employed residents relative to labor force size lowered unemployment in 2005 for the region and its counties. The labor force grew in Geneva, Henry, and Houston counties; Pike and Covington counties' number of employed fell.

Unemployment rates for the counties ranged from 4.6 percent to 7.2 percent in 2004, with 5.3 percent for the region. In August 2005, the range was 3.4 percent to 5.6 percent, with 3.9 percent for the region. Unemployment rates in the region fell to 4.7 percent in 2002 and rose to 5.3 percent in 2004, but have been falling since (Figure 10.1). Employment, the number of full-time and part-time jobs, averaged 118,660 quarterly from the second quarter of 2001 to third quarter 2004 and has been recovering since 2003 (Figure 10.2).



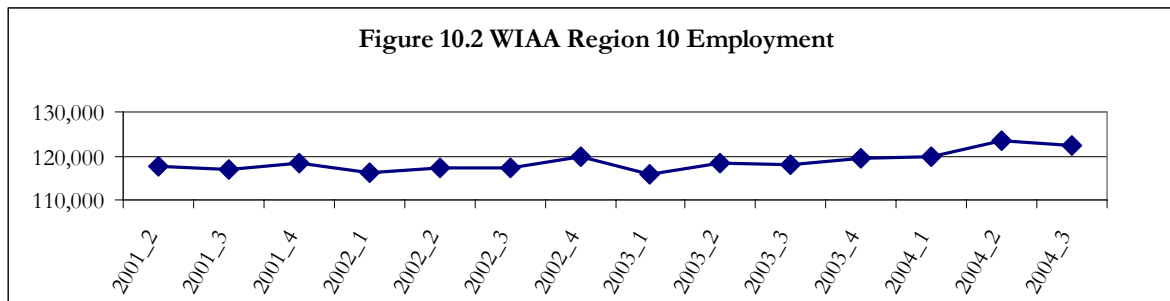
Source: Alabama Department of Industrial Relations.

Table 10.1 WIAA Region 10 Labor Force Information

	2004			
	Labor Force	Employed	Unemployed	Rate
Barbour	10,623	9,858	765	7.20%
Coffee	20,173	19,111	1,062	5.26%
Covington	17,262	16,130	1,132	6.56%
Dale	20,796	19,682	1,114	5.36%
Geneva	11,892	11,317	575	4.84%
Henry	7,653	7,231	422	5.51%
Houston	46,062	43,966	2,096	4.55%
Pike	15,143	14,341	802	5.30%
WIAA Region 10	149,604	141,636	7,968	5.33%
Alabama	2,148,766	2,029,314	119,452	5.56%
U.S.	147,401,000	139,252,000	8,149,000	5.53%

	2005 August			
	Labor Force	Employed	Unemployed	Rate
Barbour	10,499	9,909	590	5.62%
Coffee	19,952	19,217	735	3.68%
Covington	16,823	16,123	700	4.16%
Dale	20,672	19,791	881	4.26%
Geneva	12,114	11,690	424	3.50%
Henry	7,786	7,469	317	4.07%
Houston	47,010	45,417	1,593	3.39%
Pike	14,513	13,914	599	4.13%
WIAA Region 10	149,369	143,530	5,839	3.91%
Alabama	2,155,745	2,065,528	90,217	4.18%
U.S.	150,469,000	143,142,000	7,327,000	4.87%

Source: Alabama Department of Industrial Relations and U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.



Source: Alabama Department of Industrial Relations and U.S. Census Bureau.

Commuting Patterns

The region had a net inflow of 960 commuters in 2000 (Table 10.2). Barbour, Dale, Geneva, and Houston counties had net commuter inflows; Barbour County with 931 netted the most. There was significant commuting within the region as well.

Table 10.2 also shows the one-way average commute time and distance for workers in 2004; the data were collected as part of a survey on underemployment. The one-way commute takes less than 20 minutes for 66.5 percent of resident workers; between 20 and 40 minutes for 21.4 percent; and more than 40 minutes for 8.6 percent. Those who take more than an hour to work make up 2.6 percent of workers.

The commute is less than 10 miles for 55 percent of workers and about 26 percent travel 10 to 25 miles. Almost 15 percent of workers travel more than 25 miles one-way, with 5 percent exceeding 45 miles. This commuting data suggest that roads and highways must be maintained properly to ensure uninterrupted movement of workers and not slow economic development.

Table 10.2 WIAA Region 10 Commuting Patterns

Area	Inflow, 2000		Outflow, 2000	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Barbour	1,816	19.6	885	10.6
Coffee	458	4.9	573	6.9
Covington	1,202	13.0	1,796	21.6
Dale	814	8.8	593	7.1
Geneva	795	8.6	679	8.2
Henry	187	2.0	374	4.5
Houston	2,696	29.1	1,812	21.8
Pike	1,312	14.1	1,608	19.3
WIAA Region 10	9,280	100.0	8,320	100.0
Average commute time (one-way), 2004				
				Percent of workers
Less than 20 minutes				66.5
20 to 40 minutes				21.4
40 minutes to an hour				6.0
More than an hour				2.6
Average commute distance (one-way), 2004				
				Percent of workers
Less than 10 miles				55.2
10 to 25 miles				26.3
25 to 45 miles				9.6
More than 45 miles				4.9

Note: Rounding errors may be present.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau and Alabama Department of Industrial Relations.

Population

The Region 10 population estimate of 324,236 for 2004 is 1.4 percent higher than was recorded for 2000 (Figure 10.3 and Table 10.3). Four counties lost some residents. The region's population is projected to rise 5.5 percent in this decade to about 337,600 by 2010.

Barbour County will grow the fastest and Covington will experience the slowest growth. Faster employment growth can intensify in-commuting. Communities that experience rapid job gains should invest in amenities and infrastructure to attract new residents. Increasing the population will help to expand the labor force and could reduce commuter burden on the region's roads.

Figure 10.3 WIAA Region 10 Population

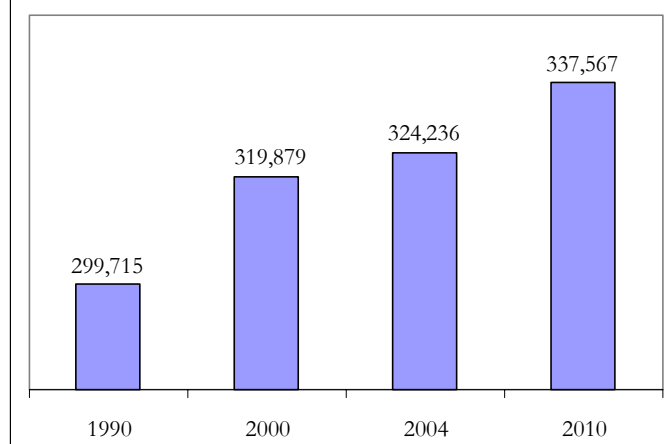


Table 10.3 WIAA Region 10 Population

	1990 Census	2000 Census	2004 Estimate	% Change 2000-2004	2010 Projected	% Change 2000-2010
Barbour	25,417	29,038	28,557	-1.7	31,871	9.8
Coffee	40,240	43,615	45,041	3.3	46,526	6.7
Covington	36,478	37,631	36,875	-2.0	38,150	1.4
Dale	49,633	49,129	49,122	0.0	50,561	2.9
Geneva	23,647	25,764	25,599	-0.6	27,411	6.4
Henry	15,374	16,310	16,699	2.4	16,977	4.1
Houston	81,331	88,787	92,947	4.7	94,214	6.1
Pike	27,595	29,605	29,396	-0.7	31,857	7.6
WIAA Region 10	299,715	319,879	324,236	1.4	337,567	5.5
Alabama	4,040,587	4,447,100	4,530,182	1.9	4,838,812	8.8
U.S.	248,709,873	281,421,966	296,655,404	5.4	314,571,000	11.8

Source: Center for Business and Economic Research, The University of Alabama and U.S. Census Bureau.

Educational Attainment

Educational attainment of Region 10 residents who are 25 years old and over is shown below in Table 10.4 and Figures 10.4 and 10.5. About 72 percent graduated from high school and 15 percent hold a bachelor's or higher degree. Coffee, Dale, and Houston counties have the highest educational attainment levels. Educational attainment is important as skills rise with education and high wage 21st century jobs demand more skill sets.

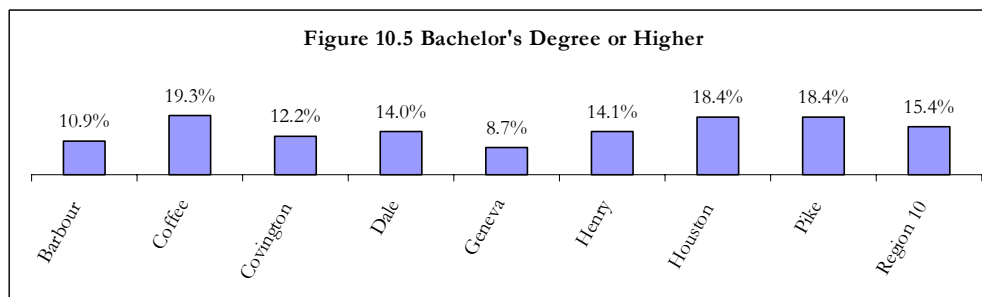
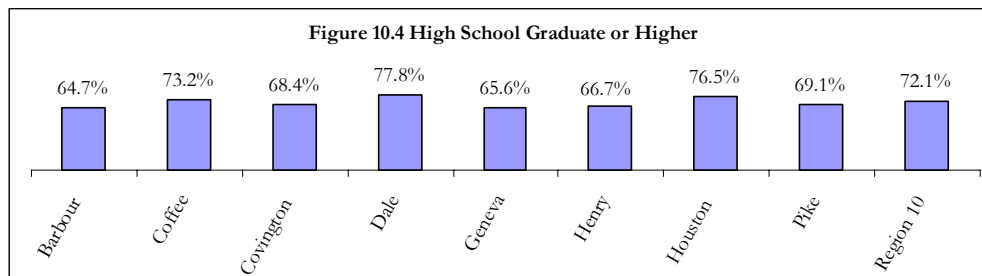


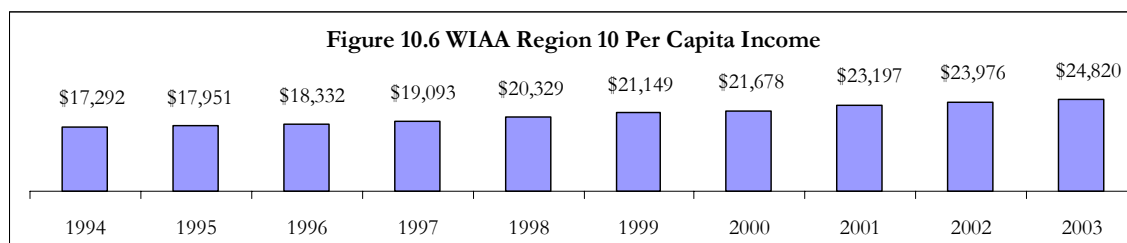
Table 10.4 Educational Attainment in 2000, Population 25 Years and Over

	Barbour	Coffee	Covington	Dale	Geneva	Henry	Houston	Pike	Region 10
Total	18,896	28,885	25,705	31,390	17,588	10,967	58,671	17,703	209,805
No schooling completed	476	494	477	312	342	228	893	271	3,493
Nursery to 4th grade	289	290	394	310	226	162	438	200	2,309
5th and 6th grade	573	670	869	593	717	308	1,065	640	5,435
7th and 8th grade	1,104	1,474	1,734	1,178	1,049	639	2,501	984	10,663
9th grade	1,002	1,299	1,287	965	1,026	586	1,972	836	8,973
10th grade	1,046	1,091	1,442	1,345	1,116	637	2,256	928	9,861
11th grade	1,061	1,397	1,027	1,207	660	594	2,518	847	9,311
12th grade, no diploma	1,128	1,040	885	1,066	910	500	2,128	766	8,423
High school graduate/equivalent	6,124	7,571	8,473	9,159	5,626	3,192	17,809	5,312	63,266
Some college, less than 1yr	1,196	2,044	1,756	2,718	1,287	754	4,370	912	15,037
Some college, 1+ yrs, no degree	1,939	3,972	2,665	5,527	2,072	1,262	8,270	2,172	27,879
Associate degree	890	1,969	1,554	2,612	1,031	560	3,634	571	12,821
Bachelor's degree	1,362	3,562	2,005	3,013	979	1,017	7,114	2,018	21,070
Master's degree	540	1,572	788	1,082	447	434	2,440	959	8,262
Professional school degree	142	308	300	239	72	84	939	200	2,284
Doctorate degree	24	132	49	64	28	10	324	87	718

Source: Center for Business and Economic Research, The University of Alabama and U.S. Census Bureau.

Per Capita Income

Per capita income (PCI) in Region 10 was \$24,820 in 2003 (Figure 10.6), 44 percent higher than in 1994, and \$1,685 or 6 percent less than the Alabama average of \$26,505. Houston County had the highest PCI with \$27,702, followed by Coffee with \$26,837. Just these two counties had PCIs above the state average. Barbour County had the lowest PCI with \$20,889.



Source: U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis and Center for Business and Economic Research, The University of Alabama.

Underemployment and Available Labor

Labor force data are often limited to information on the employed and the unemployed that is available from government sources. However, this information is not complete from the perspective of employers. New or expanding employers are also interested in underemployment

because current workers are potential employees. In fact, experience requirements in job ads are evidence that many prospective employers look beyond the unemployed for workers.

Workers in occupations that underutilize their experience, training, and skills are underemployed. These workers might look for other work because their current earnings are below what they believe they can get or because they wish to not be underemployed. Underemployment occurs for various reasons including (i) productivity growth, (ii) spousal employment and income, and (iii) family constraints or personal preferences. The various contributing factors combined with economic, social, and geographic characteristics of areas make underemployment unique to areas.

The existence of underemployment identifies economic potential that is not being realized. It is extremely difficult to measure this economic potential because of uncertainties regarding additional income that the underemployed can bring to an area. It is clear, however, that underemployment provides opportunities for selective job creation and economic growth. A business that needs skills prevalent among the underemployed could locate in WIAAs with such workers regardless of those areas' unemployment rates. A low unemployment rate, which may falsely suggest limited labor availability, is not a hindrance to the business.

The underemployed present a significant pool of labor because they tend to respond to job opportunities that they believe are better for reasons that include (i) higher income, (ii) better benefits, (iii) better terms and conditions of employment, and (iv) better match with skills, training, and experience. The underemployed also create opportunities for entry level workers as they leave lower-paying jobs for better-paying ones. Even if their previously held positions are lost or not filled (perhaps due to low unemployment), there is economic growth in gaining higher-paying jobs. Such income growth boosts consumption, savings, and tax collections. Quantifying the size of the underemployed is a necessary first step in exploiting it for economic development, workforce training, planning, and other uses.

WIAA Region 10 had an underemployment rate of 22.2 percent in 2004. Applying this rate to August 2005 labor force data means that about 31,860 employed residents were underemployed (Table 10.5). Adding the unemployed gives a total available labor pool of about 37,700 for the region. This pool is 6.5 times the number of unemployed and is a more realistic measure of the available labor in the region. However, prospective employers must be prepared to offer the underemployed higher wages, better terms of employment, or some other incentives to induce them to change jobs. Underemployment ranged from 18.2 percent for Coffee County to 28.1 percent for Henry. Houston County has the largest available labor and Henry has the smallest.

Table 10.5 Available Labor in WIAA Region 10

	<u>Region 10</u>	<u>Barbour</u>	<u>Coffee</u>	<u>Covington</u>	<u>Dale</u>	<u>Geneva</u>	<u>Henry</u>	<u>Houston</u>	<u>Pike</u>
Labor Force	149,369	10,499	19,952	16,823	20,672	12,114	7,786	47,010	14,513
Employed	143,530	9,909	19,217	16,123	19,791	11,690	7,469	45,417	13,914
Underemployment rate	22.2%	23.5%	18.2%	20.3%	23.4%	19.4%	28.1%	19.2%	25.4%
Underemployed workers	31,864	2,329	3,497	3,273	4,631	2,268	2,099	8,720	3,534
Unemployed	5,839	590	735	700	881	424	317	1,593	599
Available labor pool	37,703	2,919	4,232	3,973	5,512	2,692	2,416	10,313	4,133

Note: Rounding errors may be present. Based on August 2005 labor force data and 2004 underemployment rates.

Source: Center for Business and Economic Research, The University of Alabama and Alabama Department of Industrial Relations.

Workforce Demand

Industry Mix

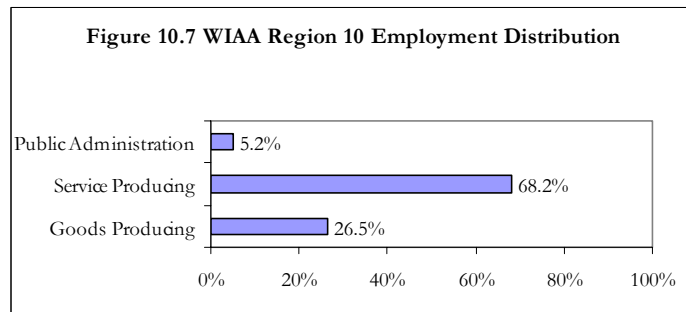
The manufacturing sector was the leading employer with 24,331 jobs in the second quarter of 2004 (Table 10.6). The rest of the top five industries by employment are health care and social assistance; retail trade; educational services; and accommodation and food services. These five industries provided 76,620 jobs, 64 percent of the region total. The average monthly wage across all industries in the region was \$2,340. Three of the leading employers—manufacturing, health care and social assistance, and educational services—paid more than this average. The highest average monthly wages were for utilities (\$4,667), mining (\$3,201), and transportation and warehousing (\$2,991). Accommodation and food services paid the least at \$1,030. Utilities also had the highest average monthly new hire wages with \$2,670, followed by wholesale trade with \$2,267. Arts, entertainment, and recreation paid the least average monthly new hire wages with \$670.

Table 10.6 Industry Mix (2nd Quarter 2004)

Industry by 2-digit NAICS Code	Total Employment	Share	Rank	Average Monthly Wage	Average Monthly New Hire Earnings
11 Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting	1,529	1.27%	17	\$2,157	\$1,867
21 Mining	117	0.10%	20	\$3,201	\$2,083
22 Utilities	2,061	1.71%	14	\$4,667	\$2,670
23 Construction	5,940	4.94%	7	\$2,492	\$2,084
31-33 Manufacturing	24,331	20.22%	1	\$2,532	\$1,994
42 Wholesale Trade	4,765	3.96%	9	\$2,927	\$2,267
44-45 Retail Trade	16,056	13.35%	3	\$1,841	\$1,270
48-49 Transportation and Warehousing	5,621	4.67%	8	\$2,991	\$2,234
51 Information	1,720	1.43%	15	\$2,816	\$1,920
52 Finance and Insurance	2,819	2.34%	12	\$2,938	\$1,981
53 Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	1,655	1.38%	16	\$1,962	\$1,282
54 Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	2,889	2.40%	11	\$2,783	\$1,814
55 Management of Companies and Enterprises	660	0.55%	19	\$2,303	\$1,129
56 Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services	4,182	3.48%	10	\$1,690	\$1,265
61 Educational Services	10,432	8.67%	4	\$2,595	\$1,545
62 Health Care and Social Assistance	16,472	13.69%	2	\$2,578	\$1,863
71 Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	755	0.63%	18	\$1,055	\$670
72 Accommodation and Food Services	9,329	7.75%	5	\$1,030	\$722
81 Other Services (except Public Administration)	2,665	2.22%	13	\$1,795	\$1,348
92 Public Administration	6,307	5.24%	6	\$2,183	\$1,232
ALL INDUSTRIES	120,305	100.00%		\$2,340	

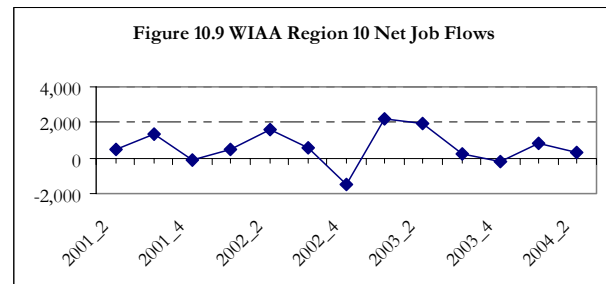
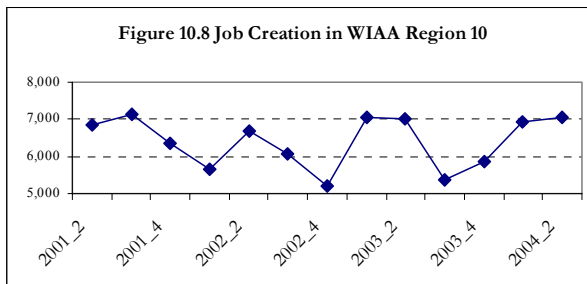
Source: Alabama Department of Industrial Relations and U.S. Census Bureau.

By broad industry classification, service producing industries provided about 68 percent of all covered jobs in the region in second quarter 2004 (Figure 10.7). Goods producing industries were next with 27 percent and public administration had 5 percent.



Job Creation and Net Job Flows

On average, about 6,400 jobs were created per quarter from second quarter 2001 to second quarter 2004 (Figure 10.8). Average quarterly net job flows was 640 in the same period (Figure 10.9). Net job flows have ranged from a loss of 1,500 to a gain of about 2,200. Job creation refers to the number of new jobs that are created either by new area businesses or through the expansion of existing firms. Net job flows reflect the difference between current and previous employment at all businesses.



Source: Alabama Department of Industrial Relations and U.S. Census Bureau.

High-Demand Occupations

Table 10.7 shows the top 34 of about 440 occupations ranked by projected demand for jobs. Many of these occupations are common to the region's top five employment sectors: manufacturing; health care and social assistance; retail trade; educational services; and accommodation and food services. Thus these sectors will continue to dominate employment in the region. The top five high-demand occupations are Cashiers; Retail Salespersons; Waiters and Waitresses; Combined Food Preparation and Serving Workers; and Truck Drivers, Heavy and Tractor-Trailer.

Table 10.7 Selected High-Demand Occupations (Base Year 2002 & Projected Year 2012)

Occupation	Annual Average Job Openings		
	Total	Due to Growth	Due to Separations
Cashiers	240	35	205
Retail Salespersons	195	40	155
Waiters and Waitresses	155	30	125
Combined Food Preparation and Serving Workers**	145	40	105
Truck Drivers, Heavy and Tractor-Trailer	100	45	55
Registered Nurses**	90	40	50
Aircraft Mechanics and Service Technicians**	***	***	***
General and Operations Managers**	80	25	55
Office Clerks, General	75	15	60
Meat, Poultry, and Fish Cutters and Trimmers**	70	30	40
First-Line Supervisors/Managers, Retail Sales	65	25	40
Nursing Aides, Orderlies, and Attendants**	60	30	30
Janitors and Cleaners, Except Maids	55	20	35
Licensed Practical and Licensed Vocational Nurses**	55	20	35
Bookkeeping, Accounting, and Auditing Clerks	50	5	45
Teacher Assistants	50	20	30
Sales Representatives, Except Technical and Scientific Products	45	15	30
Maids and Housekeeping Cleaners**	45	20	25
Child Care Workers	40	10	30
Maintenance and Repair Workers, General	40	15	25
Elementary School Teachers, Except Special Education	40	15	25
Automotive Service Technicians and Mechanics	40	10	30
Counter and Rental Clerks**	40	15	25
Receptionists and Information Clerks**	35	15	20
Team Assemblers	35	0	35
First-Line Supervisors/Managers of Office and Administrative Support Workers	35	5	30
Security Guards**	35	15	20
Production, Planning, and Expediting Clerks**	***	***	***
Food Preparation Workers**	30	10	20
Cooks, Institution and Cafeteria	30	5	25
Tellers	30	5	25
Secondary School Teachers, Except Special Education	30	10	20
First-Line Supervisors/Managers of Production and Operating Workers	30	5	25
Landscaping and Groundskeeping Workers	30	10	20
Cooks, Restaurant	25	5	20
Police and Sheriff's Patrol Officers	25	5	20
Welders, Cutters, Solderers, and Brazers**	25	10	15
Truck Drivers, Light or Delivery Services	25	15	10
Customer Service Representatives**	25	10	15

Note: A minimum of 25 average annual job openings is used as selection criterion and data are rounded to nearest 5.

** Qualify as both high-demand and fast-growing occupations.

*** The data for these occupations are confidential using Bureau of Labor Statistics standards.

Source: Alabama Department of Industrial Relations.

Fast-Growing Occupations

The 17 fastest growing occupations ranked by projected growth of employment are listed in Table 10.8. The top five fast-growing occupations are Medical Assistants; Dental Assistants; Home Health Aides; Medical and Health Services Managers; and Production, Planning, and Expediting Clerks. Fifteen occupations are both high-demand and fast-growing, six of which are Registered Nurses; Aircraft Mechanics and Service Technicians; Licensed Practical & Licensed Vocational Nurses; Welders, Cutters, Solderers, and Brazers; Production, Planning, and Expediting Clerks; and General and Operations Managers.

Table 10.8 Selected Fast-Growing Occupations (Base Year 2002 & Projected Year 2012)

Occupation	Employment		Percent Change	Annual Growth (Percent)	Total Annual Average Job Openings
	2002	2012			
Medical Assistants	270	400	48.1	4.01	20
Dental Assistants	230	310	34.8	3.03	10
Home Health Aides	260	340	30.8	2.72	15
Medical and Health Services Managers	210	270	28.6	2.54	10
Production, Planning, and Expediting Clerks**	***	***	***	***	***
Counter and Rental Clerks**	670	840	25.4	2.29	40
Bill and Account Collectors	280	350	25.0	2.26	15
Pharmacists	290	360	24.1	2.19	10
Medical Records and Health Information Technicians	170	210	23.5	2.14	10
Welders, Cutters, Solderers, and Brazers**	510	630	23.5	2.14	25
Preschool Teachers, Except Special Education	270	330	22.2	2.03	10
Aircraft Mechanics and Service Technicians**	***	***	***	***	***
Medical Transcriptionists	140	170	21.4	1.96	10
Receptionists and Information Clerks**	710	860	21.1	1.94	35
Security Guards**	720	870	20.8	1.91	35
Pharmacy Technicians	250	300	20.0	1.84	10
Personal and Home Care Aides	200	240	20.0	1.84	10

Note: Selection criterion is annual growth rate of at least 1.8 percent. Employment level data are rounded to the nearest 10 and job openings data are rounded to the nearest 5.

** Qualify as both high-demand and fast-growing occupations.

*** The data for these occupations are confidential using Bureau of Labor Statistics standards.

Source: Alabama Department of Industrial Relations.

High-Earning Occupations

Any discussion of earnings must consider that wages vary with experience. Occupations with the highest entry wages may not necessarily have the highest average or experienced wages. Table 10.9 shows 50 selected highest earning occupations in the region. These high-earning occupations are mainly in health, legal, management, engineering, computer, and education fields. They are generally not fast-growing or high-demand. Of the top 10, six are in health, three are in management, and one is legal. One occupation, General and Operations Managers, is both high-earning and high-demand. Just two occupations—Pharmacists and Medical and Health Services Managers—are both high-earning and fast-growing.

Table 10.9 Selected High-Earning Occupations

Occupation	Mean Annual Salary (\$)
Surgeons	180,856
Obstetricians and Gynecologists	176,010
Internists, General	169,749
Family and General Practitioners	146,370
Pediatricians, General	144,581
Chief Executives	135,304
Dentists, General	134,410
Lawyers	106,933
Engineering Managers	96,200
Natural Sciences Managers	88,795
General and Operations Managers	85,821
Aerospace Engineers	84,344
Pharmacists	83,075
Chiropractors	82,514
Optometrists	81,806
Real Estate Brokers	81,723
Computer and Information Systems Managers	81,078
Health Specialties Teachers, Postsecondary	80,930
Marketing Managers	79,435
Sales Managers	78,957
Electronics Engineers, Except Computer	78,686
Securities, Commodities, and Financial Services Sales Agents	78,458
Environmental Engineers	76,960
Chemical Engineers	76,502
Financial Managers	76,003
Airline Pilots, Copilots, and Flight Engineers	74,870
Medical and Health Services Managers	72,925
Electrical Engineers	72,904
Purchasing Managers	72,488
Computer Software Engineers, Applications	71,698
Mechanical Engineers	70,221
Education Administrators, Postsecondary	69,618
Industrial Production Managers	69,056
Management Analysts	68,806
Veterinarians	68,619
Construction Managers	67,163
Sales Engineers	66,934
Computer Programmers	66,789
Computer Systems Analysts	65,250
Industrial Engineers	65,125
Sales Representatives, Wholesale and Manufacturing, Technical and Scientific Products	64,979
Education Administrators, Elementary and Secondary School	64,480
Commercial Pilots	64,020
Architects, Except Landscape and Naval	63,627
Health and Safety Engineers, Except Mining Safety Engineers and Inspectors	63,502
Clinical, Counseling, and School Psychologists	63,253
Civil Engineers	63,190
Business Teachers, Postsecondary	63,170
Economists	62,005
Physical Therapists	61,714

Note: The list of occupations is specific to the region, but earnings are statewide. Only the 50 highest earning single occupations are presented. The list does not include occupations that are affected by confidentiality. Some high-earning occupational groups are not listed because earnings can vary considerably for occupations within these groups. Employment data are rounded to the nearest 10. The data provided are based on the November 2004 release of the Occupational Employment Statistics (OES) combined employment and wage file. Estimates for specific occupations may include imputed data.

"NA" indicates data items that are not publishable or not available.

Source: Center for Business and Economic Research, The University of Alabama and Alabama Department of Industrial Relations.

Other Workforce Issues

Available Labor

The availability of labor is critical to economic development. WIAA Region 10 currently has a low unemployment rate, but it also has a 37,700-strong available labor pool that is looking for better jobs, typically higher-wage ones. This pool includes about 31,860 underemployed workers who are willing to commute farther and longer; 63 percent are prepared for 20 or more minutes longer and 55 percent for 20 or more extra miles.

Lack of job opportunities in their areas, low wages at the available jobs, and living too far from jobs are the primary reasons given for being underemployed. Retirement and disability are the primary reasons given for not working, but a lack of job opportunities is also cited often. Some nonworkers may become part of the labor force if their problems can be addressed. Economic development efforts should take these factors into consideration.

Employment is currently growing faster than the labor force. Higher employment demand could intensify commuter inflow, but also presents communities with opportunities to attract new residents. Some communities must be prepared to invest in amenities and infrastructure to support such growth because immigration is generally more beneficial to communities than in-commuting.

Immigration is one way of growing the labor force through growth in the population. The region's population growth rate is lower than the state's rate. Another strategy to expand the labor force to meet possible increases in employment demand is to raise labor force participation by focusing on hard-to-serve populations, which include persons in poverty, those receiving welfare, those in sparsely populated areas, those on active parole, and out-of-school youth. These people are often outside of the mainstream economy and poor. They usually have difficulty finding work because they have low levels of educational attainment, lack occupational skills, or face geographic or other barriers. Some investment in training, transportation, child care, infrastructure, etc. may be needed to tap these potential workers.

Skills

Jobs require skill sets and it is necessary that jobholders have the relevant skills. High earning occupations typically require more complex skills, which are obtained in the pursuit of the high educational attainment levels that such jobs require. Low earning occupations require fewer and more basic skill sets; some low earning occupations have no minimum skill set requirements (e.g. dishwashers and maids).

Table 10.10 shows the percentage of selected occupations in WIAA Region 10 that list a particular skill as primary. We define a primary skill as one in the top 10 of the required skill set for an occupation. O*NET Online provides skill sets for all occupations ranked by the degree of importance. Thus primary skills are more important than other skills. It is important to note that a particular skill may be more important and more extensively used in one occupation than another. Table 10.10 does not address such cross-occupational skill importance comparisons.

In general, basic skills are most frequently listed as primary. Science and critical thinking skills are primary for more selected high-earning occupations than selected fast-growing and selected high-demand occupations. A similar pattern holds for complex problem solving, resource management, and systems skills; these skills require longer training periods and postsecondary education. The region's high-demand and high-growth occupations are dominated by those for which the most relevant skills are active listening, reading comprehension, speaking, writing, and service orientation.

Table 10.10 Share of Selected Occupations for Which Skill Is Primary

	Selected High-Demand Occupations	Selected Fast-Growing Occupations	Selected High-Earning Occupations
Basic Skills			
Active Learning	28%	47%	70%
Active Listening	69%	82%	84%
Critical Thinking	51%	47%	92%
Learning Strategies	28%	24%	14%
Mathematics	31%	35%	30%
Monitoring	36%	41%	40%
Reading Comprehension	69%	88%	96%
Science	0%	6%	36%
Speaking	64%	82%	66%
Writing	33%	65%	40%
Complex Problem Solving Skills			
Complex Problem Solving	5%	6%	38%
Resource Management Skills			
Management of Financial Resources	3%	0%	12%
Management of Material Resources	8%	6%	2%
Management of Personnel Resources	10%	0%	16%
Time Management	44%	65%	52%
Social Skills			
Coordination	31%	29%	36%
Instructing	33%	41%	26%
Negotiation	5%	0%	18%
Persuasion	5%	0%	16%
Service Orientation	36%	35%	12%
Social Perceptiveness	44%	59%	14%
Systems Skills			
Judgment and Decision Making	15%	24%	70%
Systems Analysis	0%	0%	12%
Systems Evaluation	0%	0%	28%
Technical Skills			
Equipment Maintenance	15%	18%	0%
Equipment Selection	13%	18%	6%
Installation	10%	12%	0%
Operation and Control	8%	6%	6%
Operation Monitoring	10%	12%	4%
Operations Analysis	0%	0%	20%
Programming	0%	0%	4%
Quality Control Analysis	5%	12%	4%
Repairing	13%	12%	0%
Technology Design	0%	0%	10%
Troubleshooting	10%	6%	12%
Note: Definitions for skill types and skills are available at http://online.onetcenter.org/skills/			
Source: O*NET Online and Center for Business and Economic Research, The University of Alabama.			

Education and Training Issues

Educational attainment in WIAA Region 10 is lower than that of the state. Seventy-two percent of residents age 25 and over have graduated from high school and 15.4 percent have a bachelor's or higher degree, compared to 75 percent and 19 percent, respectively, for Alabama. Coffee, Dale, and Houston counties have the highest educational attainment levels. Education and skill requirements for jobs keep rising and emphasize a very strong need to raise educational attainment in the region.

Table 10.11 shows the number of selected occupations in the region for which a particular education/training category is most common. In general, high-earning occupations typically require a bachelor's or higher degree. Most of the high-demand and fast-growing jobs do not require postsecondary training; some form of on-the-job training is the minimum requirement. The challenge for the region is that future high-demand jobs are likely to require some postsecondary education and training.

Table 10.11 Number of Selected Occupations with Most Common Education/Training Requirement

Most Common Education/Training Requirements Categories	Selected High-Demand Occupations	Selected Fast-Growing Occupations	Selected High-Earning Occupations
First Professional Degree		1	11
Doctoral Degree			1
Master's Degree			4
Work Experience Plus a Bachelor's or Higher Degree	1	1	13
Bachelor's Degree	2		18
Associate Degree	1	1	
Postsecondary Vocational Training	3	3	1
Work Experience in a Related Occupation	3		1
Long-term On-the-job Training	3	1	
Moderate On-the-job Training	7	3	1
Short-term On-the-job Training	19	7	

Note: The last three education and training requirements categories are based on the length of time it generally takes an average worker to achieve proficiency for occupations in which postsecondary training is usually not needed for entry. **Long-term** requires more than 12 months on-the-job training that can include up to four years of apprenticeship, formal classroom instruction, and short-term employer-sponsored training. Trainees are generally considered to be employed in the occupation. **Moderate-term** requires 1 to 12 months on-the-job experience and informal training. **Short-term** requires up to 1 month on-the-job experience and training.

Source: O*NET Online; Center for Business and Economic Research, The University of Alabama and Alabama Department of Industrial Relations.

The finding that basic skills are important for all the selected occupations (Table 10.10) indicates a strong need for training in these skills. Ideally, all high school graduates should possess basic skills so that postsecondary and higher education can focus on other and more complex skill types while enhancing basic skills. Employers should be an integral part of planning for training as they can point out the skill needs of the future and any existing gaps.

High-earning occupations make up a small component of total employment and jobs offered by top employers in the region. Diversifying the region's economy would strengthen it. Economic development should also focus on retaining, expanding, and attracting businesses that provide more high-earning jobs. Workforce development should pay attention to postsecondary and higher

educational systems to ensure a ready and available workforce for these businesses. The higher incomes to graduates of these institutions would help raise personal income for the region. Raising personal income by improving educational attainment and technological skills is an effective economic development strategy, especially for a region with a low population growth rate, lower educational attainment, and a large number of low wage jobs.

A highly educated and productive workforce is a critical economic development asset. Together, workforce development and economic development can provide this asset and build a strong well-diversified regional economy. Indeed, one cannot achieve success without the other.

Regional Advisory Council Annual Report: Implications for Action

The material in this section is from the 2005 Annual Report of the Region 10 Workforce Development Regional Advisory Council. It does not necessarily reflect the opinions of the direct contributors to this workforce report.

Action issue 1. Where must education and training opportunities be advanced or marketed to meet the demands of critical skills/ worker shortages and high-growth occupations in the region?

The two sources having the greatest impact on one's educational development are the home and grades K-12 school. Parental obligations to advise and council children are being neglected or ignored particularly in families with lower incomes. Parental education has not been successful toward promoting career technical education. However, several successful Career Technical Education programs have been recently established in various school systems in the region that have created basic curriculums that support existing industry needs. School counselors have a critical responsibility to inform students of opportunities in skilled, high-wage jobs. Most high school counselors are not aware of or do not promote these opportunities. The universal applications of the WorkKeys skill assessment will help students evaluate their skill level and job placement potential and should be adopted throughout the region.

Action issue 2. How can/ should worker skills be generally upgraded in the region?

Skill upgrades in the region can be accomplished using several strategies:

1. Industry involvement by guaranteeing a job to individuals who complete skills training. This could be a contract between student and industry and could also involve on the job part-time and apprenticeship training.
2. Scholarships offered by the private or the public sector available to students or adults willing to complete training in high-demand, high-skill careers.
3. Incumbent worker programs and Focused Industry Training (FIT) programs have been successful in the area and should be expanded by the state Office of Workforce Development.
4. A public service marketing campaign needs to be created to educate potential participants concerning the benefits of high-wage, high-skill job opportunities.

5. Adult literacy programs should be better promoted by business and the public. Over 25 percent of adults in Region 10 are functionally illiterate.

Action issue 3. How can future workers be helped to make better choices about career preparation (high school, youth/young adults age 18-26, adults, dislocated workers)?

There is an obvious need for parents, high school counselors and teachers to be better informed concerning job opportunities for career technical education. The economy, technology, job skills, and opportunities for technical and specialized training have evolved very fast, resulting in many uninformed parents and educators. Programs that educate these individuals to job opportunities are needed. High school dropouts and young adults form an untapped resource of potential skilled workers. Many workers, underemployed for several years, have families and have matured in their outlook and work ethic. This represents a potential target for skilled-job training. Outreach programs that include churches, retail establishments, and the media could be developed to reach this class of individuals.

Action issue 4. Should worker assessment and credentialing be increased in the region (pre-service and in-service training)?

Yes, there is a clear need for this type of effort in Region 10. The Alabama Works program was a successful effort in the area as well as Incumbent Worker Training and some of the ongoing career technical education programs. WorkKeys assessment, which has also been adopted by some of the area colleges, has been a successful method of assessing skills. However, it has not been well funded or universally applied.

Other Action Issues? There is a clear need for better cooperation between public workforce development programs, business and industry, and the public schools. In every Region 10 discussion, this issue was discussed. Regional workforce efforts should be pursued and a formal regional structure be empowered to ensure cooperation on a regional level.

Action issue 5. What roles should be played by the various stakeholder groups (employers, partner agencies, elected officials, faith-based/ community-based organizations, Workforce Investment Board members, grantor agencies, news media, vendors/ contractors) at the local, regional, state and federal levels in implementing the action steps outlined above?

A regional structure should be formally established and recognized by the State of Alabama as well as the U.S. Department of Labor. This structure will ensure that stakeholders are coordinated in their efforts to improve the workforce and that funds are prioritized by stakeholders.